

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3878

INFO USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION MTN GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 17597

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRD, ECEN, JA

SUBJECT: EXPANDED U.S.-JAPAN STEEL TALKS

REFS: (A) TOKYO 17544; (B) TOKYO 17389

1. SUMMARY: JAPANESE ARE STILL DEEPLY CONCERNED THAT U.S. MAY SEEM TO BE USING DECEMBER 6-7 STEEL TALKS TO PRESSURE JAPAN INTO NEW CONCESSIONS OR TO INTERVENE IN JAPAN-EC RELATIONS. EMBASSY SUGGESTS WE RELIEVE THIS CONCERN BY STATING IN PUBLIC AND TO JAPANESE THAT THESE TALKS ARE NORMAL CONSULTATIONS AND THAT WE DO NOT PLAN TO RAISE SPECIFIC BI-LATERAL COMPLAINTS AT THIS TIME. END SUMMARY.

2. WITHOUT EXCESSIVELY BELABORING POINT, EMBASSY WOULD LIKE TO ASSURE THAT STEEL TALKS DELEGATION UNDERSTANDS THAT JAPANESE TENSION RE EXPANDED STEEL TALKS IS REAL AND DEEPLY FELT. THIS FEELING OF TENSION IS BEING CONVEYED AT ALL LEVELS AND WITH THE SAME REFRAIN. JAPANESE OFFICIALS, ESPECIALLY IN THE FORN MINISTRY, FEAR THAT RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY SOMEONE WILL CONCLUDE THAT THE JAPANESE RESPONSE TO THE EC IS BEING CLEARED WITH OR DICTATED BY
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THE U.S. EQUALLY WORRISOME TO THE JAPANESE IS FEAR

THAT THE U.S. IS JOINING THE EC TO PRESS NEW DEMANDS.

3. FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN ASKED BY ONE EC MEMBER COUNTRY REP IN TOKYO WHY THEY CONSULT AT ALL WITH THE U.S. RE JAPAN-EC ISSUES. THE ANSWER THAT SUCH EXCHANGES ARE ONLY NORMAL BETWEEN TWO MAJOR TRADING PARTNERS AND THAT THE ABSENCE OF THEM IS UNTHINKABLE DOES NOT COME EASILY TO THE JAPANESE. THEIR SENSITIVITY TO CRITICISM FOR NOT ADHERING TO CORRECT PROCEDURE IS INTENSE. THEY ARE ALSO A BIT WORRIED THAT THE USG, HAVING EXPANDED THE STEEL TALKS TO COVER DISC AND THE MTN, AND NOW HAVING ADDED JAPAN-EC TOPICS, IS GOING TO CONVERT THEM INTO AN ARM-TWISTING EXERCISE IN ORDER TO SHOW POTENTIAL U.S. DOMESTIC INTERESTS THAT THE U.S. IS EXTRACTING FROM JAPAN JUST AS MUCH AS THE EC. THEY KNOW THAT WE CANNOT SIT IDLE WHILE THE EC GAINS, OR SEEMS TO GAIN, NEW ADVANTAGES, BUT THEY CANNOT RISK CHARGES THAT ANYBODY IS PUSHING THEM AROUND.

4. A NICE BALANCE BETWEEN THESE NEEDS IS ACHIEVABLE. THE PRESS GUIDANCE WORKED OUT ON NOVEMBER 24 IN TOKYO WAS A LONG STEP FORWARD. WASHINGTON'S READING OUT OF THAT GUIDANCE, INCIDENTALLY, WAS PUBLISHED IN FULL IN THE TOKYO PRESS ON NOVEMBER 28 WITH ONLY A FEW CHANGES, AND HAS NOT PRODUCED ANY OBJECTIONS OR DEMURRALS.

5. TO EASE JAPANESE WORRIES FURTHER IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO CONFIRM THAT WE ARE NOT USING PRESSURE TACTICS AND THAT OUR CONSULTATIONS ARE NORMAL AND EVEN ROUTINE UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES. WE MIGHT ADD THAT WE DO NOT PLAN TO RAISE ANY BILATERAL ISSUES AT THESE PARTICULAR TALKS.

6. EMBASSY SUGGESTS THAT WASHINGTON AGENCIES RESPOND TO ANY PRESS INQUIRIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FOREGOING, AND THAT THE EMBASSY BE AUTHORIZED TO STATE TO THE JAPANESE THAT WE ARE TAKING THAT LINE. HOWEVER, IF WE MUST RAISE SPECIFIC ISSUES BEYOND THOSE ON THE AGENDA ON DECEMBER 6-7, PLEASE ADVISE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE WHAT THEY ARE.

HODGSON
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